

CHURCH LIFE

OCTOBER 2026



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OPEN & AFFIRMING
MIDDLEBURYUCC.ORG**

FROM THE PASTOR

When we think of October 31st, our first thought is likely Halloween, but October 31st is also Reformation Day. It's the day in 1517 that Martin Luther is said to have nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg church calling for debate on various aspects of church teaching and practice. This is considered the event that started the Protestant Reformation.

If you want to be a bit more technical about things, the Protestant Reformation was really more Protestant reformations. There were various reform movements happening in many places throughout Europe at the same time. Our New England Congregational tradition emerged from the Swiss and English Reformations, and we're part of the Reformed branch of Protestantism. (Other branches are things like Lutheran, Baptist, etc.)

Some of the most distinctive features of Reformed Protestantism are actually reflected in our worship space. Our meetinghouse is very plain, without any images of Jesus, saints, or biblical figures. Historically, Reformed Protestants were iconoclasts, meaning adherence to a strict interpretation of the commandment not to make an idol. Stained glass, murals, and relics of saints were all decided to be idols. Reformed Protestants also put a lot of emphasis on preaching and Bible reading. Our church has a central pulpit to physically represent this idea of the centrality of the word.

A sort of unofficial motto and guiding principle of our Reformed branch of Protestantism is: "Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda." It's a Latin phrase that's colloquially translated as "the church reformed, ever reforming." However, it's better translated as "the church reformed, ever being reformed" since that last verb is passive.

One of the core theological claims of Reformed Protestantism is that human beings are inherently flawed and fallible; we are sinners. We are going to fall short, mess up, and miss the mark; it's an inherent part of being human. As a result of this flawed human nature, the Church Universal, made up of human beings, is similarly flawed.

What this means for us as individual Christians and for the Church as a whole is that we are always in the process of becoming. We are always in the process of being reformed by God's action. God loves us and the Church just as we are, but God loves us too much to let us stay that way. Through God's grace, the life of true faith is a process of being reformed, of being made more as God would have us be.

Many Protestant churches observe the last Sunday of October as Reformation Sunday to commemorate the beginning of the Reformation. I know a number of colleagues who aren't fond of the practice because they see it as celebrating schism in the Church Universal or as a day that can be seen as us Protestants viewing ourselves as superior to the rest of the Church Universal.

I think they're all missing the point of the day. I think observing Reformation Sunday is primarily about taking a moment to remember that we are the church reformed, ever being reformed. It's a day not of celebrating arrival, but that God is always at work in the Church poking, prodding, and pushing us to be more who God calls us to be. It's a reminder that Church isn't meant to stand still. God's not done with us yet, and there is yet more light and truth to break forth from God's holy word.

Peace,
Katrina Manzi
Minister

BACK TO BASICS: ADULT EDUCATION SERIES 2026-2027

For each confirmation class for our teenagers, we typically have another adult to help, and over the years I've noticed adults often seem to get just as much from confirmation class as our teenagers. So, this year when we don't have a teenage confirmation class, I've decided to lightly adapt the curriculum for grownups. Learning is a lifelong endeavor after all. You are welcome to come to all the classes or just the ones that interest you. If you've got a Bible, definitely bring that with you!

The confirmation curriculum we've been using has two main components. The first is classes and the second is reading the gospel according to Luke so we get a full sense of Jesus' life in order. Each class will have a time to check in on how things are going with reading Luke according to the schedule. If you don't read Luke ahead of the class, don't worry; everything else will be read and discussed during the class

Schedule

11:30 on Sundays in the Parlor

10/25: God the Father/God the Creator (read Luke 1-2)

11/8: God the Son/Jesus Christ (read Luke 3-4)

11/29: God the Holy Spirit (read Luke 5-6)

12/13: Worship (read Luke 7-8)

1/10: The Bible (read Luke 9-11)

2/14: Saints and Gifts (read Luke 12-14)

2/28: Ministry & Service (read Luke 15-16)

3/14: Baptism (read Luke 17-18)

4/11: Spiritual Life/Prayer (read Luke 19-20)

4/25: Death and Resurrection (read Luke 21-22)

5/16: Life in the Church (read Luke 23-24)

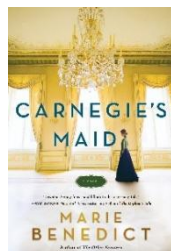
NAMES FOR ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY 11/1

On November 1st, during worship we will be observing the feast of All Saints. We will read the names of those who have died, particularly those who have died in the past year. If you would like a name included in worship, please send it to Pastor Katrina so it can be included on the list (kmanzi@middleburyucc.org)

MCC BOOK GROUP

The October book is *Carnegie's Maid* by Marie Benedict

Wednesday, October 28th at 6:00pm in the Parlor.





REFLECTION ON THE CLOSURE OF SILVER LAKE

Growing up at Silver Lake, camp became one of the most meaningful parts of my faith journey. My time there began in 2009, when I was in fifth grade and nervous about going away on my own. I was so scared that I convinced my cousin, Savannah, to attend the same week with me. Looking back, I realize I had nothing to be afraid of. What began as a week of camp quickly became a community that would remain an important part of my life through every stage of my childhood and adulthood, much like this church has. With the announcement of Silver Lake's closure, I have had to begin coming to terms with the reality that camp will no longer be there in the way I have always known it, and that a meaningful piece of my life is coming to an end.

Silver Lake helped shape the person I am today. It influenced my decision to become a teacher, strengthened my passion for volunteering, and taught me the importance of serving others. Two songs in particular, "Here I Am, Lord" and "Pass It On," reflect the lessons I learned at camp and the values that continue to guide me.

"Here I Am, Lord" is a hymn we sing at church almost every year, and its message has always resonated deeply with me. The song speaks about being willing to serve God and respond to the needs and injustices within our communities. Silver Lake helped me understand what it means to put that message into action. Camp taught me to notice when people are struggling, to stand alongside those who may feel overlooked or oppressed, and to recognize that we are called to help one another. It showed me that faith is not simply something we believe, but something we live through our actions and the way we care for others.

"Pass It On" begins with the simple idea that one small spark can start a fire. That message has become another lasting lesson from my time at camp. One voice, one act of kindness, or one person choosing to care can have an impact far beyond what they may ever realize. Silver Lake taught me that acts of courage, compassion, and kindness have the power to transform individuals and communities. More importantly, camp

taught me how to create opportunities for those moments to happen and how to live out the example of love and service that Jesus gave us.

One of Silver Lake's greatest gifts has been its ability to create young stewards of the Earth and of their communities. Campers, staff, and volunteers were encouraged to take what they learned at camp and carry it with them into the world. While Silver Lake may be closing, the lessons, relationships, and sense of community it created do not have to end. The hundreds of people who have been shaped by this place now carry those lessons with them into their schools, workplaces, churches, families, and communities.

The closure of Silver Lake marks the end of a physical place, but it does not have to mark the end of its mission. The spark that Silver Lake created in so many of us can continue to grow. We can pass on the kindness, courage, compassion, faith, and love that camp taught us and carry those lessons into the communities around us. As I reflect on my time at camp, I am reminded that its greatest legacy is not the buildings, the lake, or even the memories themselves, but the people it shaped and the values it instilled in each of us. While I will deeply miss having Silver Lake as a place to return to, I know that what it gave me will continue to live on through the way I teach, serve, volunteer, and care for others. The camp may be closing, but the spark is still alive in all of us who were lucky enough to be a part of it. It is now our responsibility to keep that spark going, to pass it on, and to let the lessons of Silver Lake continue to make a difference in the world.

On behalf of the Board of Deacons
Brittany Romaniello

FRIENDS OF SILVER LAKE

Friends of Silver Lake, Inc. is a new nonprofit formed to unite the dispersed community that values Silver Lake and to work toward a vision of future ministry in line with its historic mission. Created just after the announcement of Silver Lake's closing in November, FOSL is moving with strength to continue this sacred legacy's ministry. It is a membership organization and we encourage you to join in this future-oriented ministry. Whether you were ever a camper or simply loved

retreats, served as a volunteer or just know others whose lives were transformed there, we hope you'll go to <https://www.friendsofsilverlake.com> and click on "Stay connected" to learn more and join this important movement of the Holy Spirit! Friends of Silver Lake has put in a proposal with the Southern New England Conference to purchase the Silver Lake property to ensure the ministry of Silver Lake will continue.

FROM THE MISSION BOARD

Wait, what is the correct name of this Board- is it Mission or Missions plural? I must admit that this always niggled at me, but when I became the chair of this Board, I had to get it straight in my head and make sure that we are, if not correct, at least consistent.

I started with Google and [true confession] used AI to search. It seems that not only did I get many hits on solving this point of semantics, but the debate began over 200 years ago during the Modern Missions Movement.

Here goes: *Mission* is a broad category that includes everything the church is doing that points toward the kingdom of God. It refers to who the church is and what the church does to advance Christ's glory. Mission is the proclamation of the Gospel and meeting the needs of the poor and needy. Luke 4:17-19.

Missions describes the Church's activity to advance Christ's kingdom, *usually* across language and or ethnic boundaries. And I think this is where the niggling originates. Do we really do missions work? Growing up, my father was a supporter and friend of a catholic priest named Father Julian. Father Julian was a missionary who spent most of his life spreading the word of God and doing God's work in the Philippines. When he was back in the States, he visited our home with stories from a faraway land and brought carved gifts made by the people he met there. One of these is a beautiful carving of the last supper that is hanging in the prayer chapel off the narthex of St. George's. Father Julian was a missionary, his life's work was missions, he slept at the missions, he crossed cultural boundaries to spread the word of God and serve the needy. To me, that is missions.

Back to where I started. Although the causes we support on behalf of the Church's wider mission do not *usually* cross geographic boundaries, we do what we do to glorify God and help the needy. Both definitions work to describe the work that the M. Board does. Does it really matter, you ask? Well, unless you have a penchant for word usage, the answer is no. The final answer is in deference to how we are listed the MCC Bylaws: We are officially the Board of Missions. And I am fine with this.

Erika Carrington

MUSIC NOTES **SOPRANO/ALTO/TENOR/BASS**

As you know, we always welcome new singers into the choir, whether as regular or occasional participants.

You'll also likely know that the choir sings in both unison and in harmony, depending on the music. As a rule, the highest sounding natural voices sing the soprano and tenor parts and the lowest sounding voices sing the alto and bass parts.

This all had me thinking about these musical terms and how many of the words we use routinely in music come from the development of church music.

The short version of the story is this: in the early centuries of the church, all music used in worship was sung in unison (think of the chants that we sometimes still hear today).

But as music developed and harmony was introduced, musicians and singers needed to distinguish between singers on the main melody line and those singing an added harmony part. The main singers and their part were called the *tenore*, from the Latin, meaning to "hold", because those singers held on to and maintained the main melody. The singers adding an additional harmony part to the music we called *altus*, again from the Latin, meaning an alternate sung against the main melody.

As music further developed, some composers and singers started adding a third voice part which was called the *superious*, which was sung higher above the other two parts. And with time, composers also added a *basso* part which sang the bottom or lowest notes.

Over the centuries, and with the influence of multiple languages, our modern terminology of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass evolved. But it all started with the musical needs of the medieval church.

Blessings,
Donna Obarowski

P.S. Choir rehearsals are generally on Sunday mornings from 8:30 to 9:45. All are welcome.

STEWARDSHIP

The Annual Stewardship pledge drive this year comes on the tails of the highly successful *Foundations for Our Future* capital campaign, a hard act to follow. Pledges can be viewed as “monthly bills & utilities” vs “home improvements”. It’s what keeps the lights on, the internet streaming, the boilers humming and our excellent employees.

Pledging is a compounding activity. No “this” person pays for “that” expense, the cumulative contribution covers all of the expenses and what pledges alone does not cover, we remove from the endowment. In the end, we all benefit from having this place to congregate, worship and have fun.

This is very similar to the folktale “Stone Soup” which was popularized by the 1947 picture book by American children’s author Marcia Brown. The story originally was a piece of traveling European folklore passed down orally long before it was written down. The earliest known written version of the tale is “Soupe au Caillou” (“Soup from a Stone”), published posthumously in 1720 by the French writer Madame du Noyer.

Over the centuries of retelling the story would change depending on the region it is being told and changed to reflect common kitchen items and ingredients found.

In Madame du Noyer 1720 telling, the travelers were traveling Jesuits who came upon a house of children while Marica Brown's 1947 version follows three hungry soldiers. The travelers were also monks, tramps, tinkers and pilgrims. The similarity is the travelers were shunned, used good natured trickery and everybody partook in the feast.

In France & Germany it was a "magic" stone that started out the soup while in Ireland it was a bone button. Romania and Russia used an axe head while Sweden and Scandinavia used an iron nail. The other ingredients would be whatever was commonly in the kitchen where it was being told. I also visualize this story with Jesus.

Jesus is the traveler, forsaken by his own, he reveals our time, talent and treasures each individual has to offer. He doesn't trick us per se, but rather helps us realize what we have available. The "magic" rock is the foundation the church is built on and the pot represents the church. By giving of what we have we enrich not only ourselves, we enrich everybody around us.

Stone Soup is the theme for this year's Pledge drive. Think about what "ingredient" you can bring to the church, knowing that no matter how little it may seem, together we can do great things.

Your Stewardship Board:

Andrew Kwashnak

ShawnaLee Waterbury-Kwashnak

Michelle Finn

CONCLUDING OUR FOUNDATIONS CAMPAIGN

A few months ago, a very small group of us began this journey with hope. Our first conversations were tenuous....There was so much to sort through and so much to plan, that we just weren't quite sure how we



were going to get an effort of this magnitude off the ground. You placed your trust in the Campaign Executive Team to carefully, confidentially, and prayerfully steward the gifts you would entrust to us. We understood the responsibility that came with that trust, and we took it to heart.

So, we prayed. We planned, and then planned some more, and together, we began to imagine what might be possible if each of us gave according to our ability and our heart.

As I looked over our gospel readings for this week, I was especially drawn to the first book of Timothy as it applied to our work on this campaign-and I found myself returning time and again to the Apostle Paul's words to Timothy:

“Be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future.”
-1 Timothy 6:18-19

Those words have taken on new meaning for me because together, we have not simply raised funds. We have built a foundation for the future, a legacy that will strengthen this church long after we are gone. *The generosity of this congregation has exceeded every expectation. It has eternal significance and has humbled me beyond words.*

But what has moved me most is not only the generosity of your financial gifts. It has been the generosity of your lives. Throughout this campaign, you have shared your history, your stories, your sorrows, and your joys. You have reminded us of what this church has meant at the most important moments of your lives, and of what it means to belong not simply to a congregation, but to a church family. *Your stories are every bit as much a part of the legacy we are building as the dollars we have raised.*

Also, I have been a part of a remarkable group of volunteers who gave countless hours of their time, their energy, their wisdom, and their hearts. They worked quietly behind the scenes, each doing their part to move this campaign forward. Many of you spoke with them, met with them, and that relationship propelled our success. But I would be remiss if I

didn't acknowledge the small core group who met faithfully every week, often everyday, to turn what we could only imagine into a reality. They gave countless hours of their time, their energy, their wisdom, and their hearts. I must acknowledge my co-chair Sal Sena, Bob Giannini, Diane Barnard, the entire lead gifts team and Reverend Katrina.. how many mornings we sat in the conference room prioritizing what we needed to do that week. They planned, organized, encouraged, visited, wrote, prayed, listened, and quietly carried this work forward with grace and unwavering commitment. *Their faithfulness has been an extraordinary gift to the Middlebury Congregational Church.*

Foundations for our Future has reminded me that what we do with our time, our talents, and our resources always reaches beyond ourselves. *Every act of generosity becomes part of something larger- the better angels of our compassion, the common good we build together, and ultimately, the powerful love of God made visible in the world. I believe that is the true legacy of this campaign.*

Years from now, people will walk beneath a repaired roof, gather in renewed spaces, and worship in a church made stronger because of what happened here. Many will never know the names of those whose generosity made it possible, but they will experience its blessings.

And isn't that how God so often works? Through ordinary people whose quiet acts of faith become extraordinary gifts for generations they will never meet.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Thank you for believing in our church. Thank you for believing in one another. And thank you for helping build not only for today, but for all those who will call this church home in the years to come.

To God be the glory.

With faith, hope and gratitude,
Ellen Aronheim



FAITH ♥ FRIENDS ♥ GOOD TEA ♥ CREATIVITY ♥ COMMUNITY

CLASSIFIEDS

Running Club

Established in July 2025, the Middlebury, CT Run Club meets twice a week, Thursdays at 6pm and Saturdays at 9am. Currently each meetup gathers at the Middlebury Volunteer Fire Department at 65 Tucker Hill Road we run on the safe and off street Middlebury Greenway Trail. ALL are welcome as well as ALL skill levels. We are a no pressure group that is comprised of walkers and beginner runners all the way up to competitive marathon runners. Run/walk at your own pace or bring your leashed dog and just take a nice stroll and meet some new people. We have occasional team events, theme nights, raffles, swag, etc. Also, each meetup will always have a first aid kit on hand, bug spray, and a water bowl and healthy treats for the puppies. We practice SAFE: S(Safety) A(Accountability) F(Fun) E(Exercise). So what are you waiting for?! Check us out, you may have just found your new favorite weekly event.



Looking for Car to buy, Garage to Rent, Offering Handyman/Yardwork Services (Volunteer or Paid)

David Haase dshinwtbyct@hotmail.com 860-993-9285

- looking for a 2002 or older 4cyl. or 6cyl. pickup truck or hatchback car
- looking for a garage to rent for storage.

Portraiture

For the love of Fur-Babies! Commission a quality hand drawn or painted pet portrait in Charcoals or Oils. Limited spaces for the holidays.

www.shawnalee.com



Classifieds

If you want to include a classified in the November Church Life, please email your classified information to the main office at office@middleburyucc.org by Wednesday, October 21st.

REEL FAITH: THE HERO'S JOURNEY WITH JESUS

The Third Annual Fairfield East Association of the SNEUCC's Men's Retreat is happening November 20th – 22nd at Wisdom House in Litchfield, Connecticut. Join men from across the state in an exploration of the spiritual journey of Christian faith through the lens of science fiction and fantasy films. With thoughtful conversation, scripture, and personal reflection, Rev. Todd Shipley will connect moments from several films that uncover the

sacred journey unfolding within and around us. For more information, contact David McKinnis at DavidMcKinnis@optonline.net or sign up at <https://bit.ly/FEAMensRetreat>.



Men's Retreat

Reel Faith: The Hero's Journey with Jesus

Iconic sci-fi and fantasy film moments blend with thoughtful conversation, scripture, and personal reflection. *Uncover the sacred journey unfolding within and around you.*

Details:
Nov. 20 -22
Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT
Cost: \$175/\$220/\$300
Financial Aid Available
Info & Registration:
<https://bit.ly/FEAMensRetreat>



OFFICE HOURS

Wednesday & Thursday, 10/7-8, 1-5pm

Wednesday & Friday, 1-5pm all other weeks (Regular hours)

Contacts: office@middleburyucc.org or 203-758-2671

NEW MEMBERS

Olivia Banwell, 9/20/26

IMPORTANT DATES

10/4: 10am World Communion Sunday Worship (outdoors in 9/27 outdoor worship rained out)

10/10: 8am-1pm Blood Drive (Social Hall)

10/11: 10am Worship

10/18: 10am Worship

10/23: 7pm Youth Group Bonfire Night (Parsonage Front Lawn)

10/24: 1:30-3:30pm Tea Party

10/25: 10am Reformation Sunday Worship

11:30am Back to Basics Bible Study: God the Father/God the Creator (read Luke 1-2, Parlor)

**Middlebury Congregational Church
1242 Whittmore Rd.
Middlebury CT 06762**

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